

The question now is, shall we complete the work to the mineral regions of the Alleghenies, and afford it an opportunity to extricate the State from the difficulties already produced by the expenditures on its construction; or shall we abandon it in its unfinished and unproductive condition, and with it, all hope of relief from the enormous debt with which we are now burthened, other than by direct taxation.

No matter how we may condemn the policy of past legislatures which have involved us in this work, still it must be plain to all, that an abandonment now would bring immediate ruin upon the State. To abandon the work at this time, and to leave the people to pay the millions heretofore expended upon it, without an effort to make the canal yield something to alleviate at least the burden, if not to avert it altogether, would be more unwise and ruinous, if possible, than the original undertaking.

It seems that those persons who have heretofore opposed those large expenditures of public money, through a proper regard for economy, and with a view of averting an enormous tax upon the people, should be no less slow in lending their aid now, for the purpose of completing the canal, than its original projectors and friends. Will the present legislature fail to avail themselves of the only means which are left them, and which afford the only hope of extricating the State from her present embarrassments? Will the opportunity for relieving the people from taxation, which the completion of the canal will afford, be suffered to pass unimproved? Will we be willing to meet our constituents and to tell them we have *done nothing, attempted nothing*, to avert the evils which are hanging over them?

Without venturing an opinion regarding the maximum amount of tolls the canal will yield when finished, it must seem clear to every mind, that it will pay annually, a sum greatly exceeding the interest on the amount necessary now to finish it. The quantity of coal which will be consumed at the public works at Harper's Ferry, in the District cities, and at places bordering on the Potomac river, without reference to a more foreign consumption, would pay more than the interest on the amount now required to complete the work.

There seems not to be a doubt that when the canal is completed to Cumberland, it will pay the interest upon the whole amount advanced towards it by the State. Till it is finished, we need expect no revenue from its trade. It never was contemplated that the work would yield any revenue to the State till after its completion to the coal mines in Alleghany. On this point we would beg leave to refer to a report, in part, which the committee had the honor some days since, to submit to the consideration of of the House, in relation to this subject.

If the canal is not finished we repeat, it will yield nothing—if, however, it is finished, it will pay greatly more, at the most reduced estimate, than the present cost of completion. In this view, without reference to the fact that the work when finished,